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〈論文〉

教えること・学ぶことへの自叙伝的アプローチ

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1. Autobiographical approaches in education

This paper explores a crucial connection between autobiographical inquiries and individual identity as lived experience and how these inquiries serve as a lens through which to recognize the meaningfulness of individual experiences and identity. I hope to show that autobiographical approaches in education become a process through which, by using a story, the person can gain awareness of their own condition and understand the meaning they give to themselves, to the others, and to the external world.

Our life experiences influence and shape our pedagogical commitments. Autobiographical approaches function as a unique lens to explore and comprehend professional transformation.

From a pedagogic perspective, the application of the autobiographical approaches to education caused an evolution in the ways in which we think about ourselves as teachers and learners. Autobiographical inquiries serve as a perspective that helps us to comprehend and explain reality by considering the world as a rich, complex text that can be described and understood from each person's stories and narratives. Since subjective interpretation of reality is inherently complex and multi-dimentional, the world of the person cannot be truly understood without reference to values and meanings through which persons think and live. The autobiographical approaches, in other words, are the ability to acknowledge, absorb, interpret, and act on the stories of self and others. They are often proposed as a means for better understanding of our educational practice.

The autobiographical approach is considered to be one of the narrative approaches, representing an effective way of understanding people, their emotions and feelings related to their condition. It becomes a pedagogic tool through which an individual's life history can be interpreted by rethinking about his or her life history and recalling episodes and experiences which are part of his or her identity. From this perspective, an autobiography represents possible means in promoting

the development of self-reflection, self-understanding and the continued discovery of one's innermost feeling.

When dealing with complex issues of education such as understanding the complex relationship between people and the dynamics of the community, autobiographical stories pave the way for a "care." Stories are no longer only the information of knowledge and happenings, but a chance for the individual to take one's care, grow and make transformation. As educational and caring process are complex phenomena, they cannot be reduced to universally valid predefined procedures and methods.

2. Writing "self" as autobiographical inquires

Then, what is unique about autobiographical inquires in education? Do stories exist before they are written? Where and how do we access to stories that have not yet been heard? Are autobiographical inquires always help us find the missing link or the possible answer to the very inquiries?

In educational research, writing itself is considered a channel of inquiry, an alternative way, a means of critical awareness for educators. While there are different types of writing: journals, stories, monologues, poems, novels, to name a few, writing activities enhance one's sense of being by making sense of one's vague thoughts and elusive feelings and sort out what is meaningful. Writing may assist one's gaining perspective on behavior changes that one is trying to make. It is not simply diary activities, but a tool for personal change. Personal stories are written based on writers' perception of the reality and may not be "true" in others' view. While writing provides a connection of a few events, a few patterns, a few questions, it also deconstructs previous patterns and questions.

Having an opportunity to sit in a course on autobiographical approaches for teaching at one of the Universities in North America, I observed that many teachers, researchers and professionals in the fields of education have been using the autobiographical approaches. In a teacher professional development course that I attended, along with discussions on the readings on autobiographies for education, every one hour was spent for the attendees to write about themselves and their experiences. The attendees made an effort to deal not only with the biological or chronological consequences of an episode or a subject of their choice, but also with the deeper meanings they attach to their everyday life and life history. Some of the suggested topics for attendees to write

about were “my teacher and I, ” “my mother,” “I remember when the classroom is,” “smells that I like,” “message in a book,” and “first lesson.” As a participant in the class, I recognized instantly that many students were being terrified of improvised writing time when we were asked to freely write down our thoughts on topics presented to us by our teaching assistant and read aloud what was written in the notebook in front of group members.

During the class, we found that we cannot change or erase the past simply by writing about it, but we came to believe that process of writing individual story and listening to stories each other helps us to understand ourselves much better. Later in the course, we began to “see” the educational and therapeutic impact of the autobiographical approach. We “see” autobiographical writing as a field text, the context of our life. We see autobiography not only “recording” and “reporting” and “repeating” the lived story as “known,” but “re-coding,” “re-storying” and “restoring” the lived story as “unknown.”[1]

This was achieved by collaboratively analyzing the reflections and experiences written during the course through non-structured discussion and open-ended questions thrown to the writers/participants.

One of the most important results that emerged during and after the discussion was the change reported and expressed by writers in the meaning and perception of themselves and their experiences, and consequently their understanding of their relationship with others.

From these experiences, I learned why the narrative and autobiographical approaches in education are being more and more introduced and appreciated in the care of students, teachers, and professionals who works for education. Autobiographical inquiries are not only as a self-care tool for the individual, but also as a community building tool for the understanding of the human relationship as a whole.

Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly address that narrative inquiries are often strongly autobiographical. They view narratives as the making of meaning from personal experience through reflection process in which a story-telling and a story-writing process plays a significant part. Through the process of telling and writing, we begin to recollect our experiences and to construct outlines of a personal narrative.[2]

By inviting people to write about themselves and their perception of their experiences, teachers and professionals can help themselves to give voice to their problems, to reach a better self-comprehension of one’s own experience and one’s relationship with others. The autobiographical approach makes the change from being alone to being one of the communities, from silence to

speaking, from needs to aspirations, from knowledge of experience to experience of knowledge and from lack in life to a full life.

According to Hannah Arendt, “the story reveals the meaning of what would otherwise remain an intolerable sequence of events.”[3] She points out that the narration “reveals the meaning without committing the error of defining it.”[4] In her article, Cynthia Chambers uses the autobiographical inquiry within research as a way to connect to self, others and truth. According to Chambers, autobiographical inquiry puts the writer in touch with writer’s own doings and actions, character and spirit, as well how those are historically shaped and socially situated.[5]

> How do we find the vitality needed to revitalize ourselves; to create and recreate from flowing in and out? At one time, I was convinced that the answer lay in reflection; that once teachers documented their practice (prefer in a story form) and then critically reflected on those experiences, teachers would be able to shed their false consciousness and develop a deeper understanding about themselves and how they stood in relation to children and young people (or how they stood in relation to absolutely everything, in my least humble moments).[6]

What I find most fascinating is that Chambers had fears for writing at the beginning, fears that those who read her writings may think her writing is merely a form of self-indulgence, fears of exposing oneself. In overcoming the fears, she studied life stories written by women writers, found tools in the timed writings of Natalie Goldberg,[7] Peter Elbow[8] and Dorothea Brande,[9] setting period of time for writing daily without stopping to edit, “in hopes of unearthing images and stories buried deep in the chaotic midden of (her) memory.” [10]

In the age of technology, every one of us become writers. Everyone lives stories all the time, read the stories of others all the time. We often write about our family, try to understand who we are, where we are from, where we want to go.

What is necessary is a more robust understanding of the identity of “I” in autobiographical writing. It is not sufficient to equate the “I” in autobiography with the writer. “While the ‘I’ in Sexton’s poetry appears boldly personal she in fact considered the autobiographical ‘I’ as a literary rather than a literal identity.”[11]

What we need to do in autobiographical writing is interrogate the roles and functions and positions of the “I” to acknowledge how the “I” is both revealed and concealed in writing, how the

"I" is always less than and more than the author's authority.

Writing is not simply self-expression. Writing is a way to seek lines of connection and intersection with others, to compose creative and lively possibilities for living stories for making up stories, for revising stories, for turning stories inside out and upside down so they are always transforming and transformative.

3. Rethinking memory as multidirectional

Our memories have often been fragmented and unconnected and, sometime, they have been difficult to make sense of. Autobiographical approaches are the way to tap into memory. Michael Rothberg suggests that we consider memory as multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not private.

> Our relationship to the past does partially determine who we are in the present, but never straightforwardly and directly, and never without unexpected or even unwanted consequences that bind us to those whom we consider other. When the productive, intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory is explicitly claimed, … it has the potential to create new form of solidarity and new visions of justice.[12]

Eber Hampton, in his article on education, describes how "memory comes before knowledge," and how "research may improve if researchers remember their movies."[14] One thing about research, he states, is that there is a motive. Researchers and educators do what they do for reasons, emotional reasons. That is the engine that drives them.[15] We need to learn what resists us, what pushes us back, what is against us, and to where we really belong.

> Every person's life contains experiences and memories of these experiences. The way it works for me is that I forget those things until I unwrap them, until I actually roll out the sacred medicine bundle of my life and look for those memories. I pick them up and touch them and feel them. And each memory gives me knowledge. [16]

Describing the memory of the first writing when Hampton ever published, he recognizes that the particular memory of his father was the power to conduct his research.

> The last time I saw my Dad alive was when I had handed him that little book with my article in it. When found that memory, unwrapped it, and remembered how proud my Dad was and how he took it in his hand and said, "Wait here, I'm gonna go show Ed." He got up and went to the next house to show his buddy what I had done. So I had to do my emotional work. I had to feel what I really felt about my father. I had to honor those feelings and respect them, not try to change them or try to stuff them down. I had to be not something different than what the Creator made me to feel. I had to feel what the Creator gave me to feel. Remembering these feelings gave me the knowledge and power to finish writing that paper.[17]

Conducting autobiographical research in this way can lead to unveiling of issues of one's deep concerns. It is a task of dismantling our experience and lives. Calling our attention to the importance of autobiography as a tool of research, one can allow us to explore the depths of who we are in connection to the people and places in which we live.

4. Toward a curriculum development

The phenomenological writings of Edmund Husserl consider human knowledge as the meanings that are constituted in lived experience of the world. Merleau-Ponty interprets the phenomenological reduction as a process of disciplined reflection that draws back from experience in order to see it more clearly.[18] Jean-Paul Sartre describes man as the being who is what he is not and is not what he is and has addressed his conviction that man is free to make more of what has been made of him.[19] By drawing these theories and attempting to make connections between the theories and the praxis of education, Madeline Grumet looks autobiography "for the roots of our theory, to recover our intentionality."[20]

Autobiographical approaches are challenges in education that teachers to be conscious of their "fictions" so they will not be carried away or ruled by their own myths or metaphors. Writing about one's own experiences, writing about the times and places, is to identify the assumptions that are embedded in its reflections.[21]

The autobiographical process, Grumet proposes, be moved to the very center of humanities education because "it is within that relationship of the knower to the known that education is humanizing."[22] More than ever, in the academic environment, the autobiographical approaches

could be employed and experienced. It is a difficult task to reflect upon our work and experiences when we are engaged in it. We usually postpone the process until we are removed from the specific situations and the conditions surrounding it. Providing a place and a process of reflection that can, for a few moments, withdraw from engagement when engagement is most intense is challenging. Nevertheless, it is worth taking time for autobiographical inquires as we can learn from each other, to grow as we see through another's eyes. By interrupting one's "ceaseless swimming through the forms and to climb out to a high, dry place" where one "can pause and watch the stream flow by," we can appreciate the distinctions between the actual and the conceptual levels of educational experience. Autobiographical inquiries in the curriculum, then provides a kaleidoscope of conceptual experience.

Having examined selections of writings on autobiographical approaches and the course work on autobiographical approaches at the university setting, I want to call our attention to the significance of preparing the place and time for a personal narrative, which become shared and collective narratives. Autobiographical inquiries have possibilities which push our educational and individual curriculum to be a gateway that promotes an integrated understanding of differences of all people, bringing unheard voices and ideas to the forefront of research and education. Advancing this reflective means and stance can broaden one's understanding of one's place within one's community and society as way to contribute to living well.

Notes.

1 Leggo, C. (1997). The story always ends with etc: Autobiography and poetry. English Quarterly, 29(3/4), 67-86.

2 Clandinin, D.J., and Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

3 Arendt, H. (1979). 'Isak Dinesen: (1885-1962)', *Daguerrotypes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.xx.

4 *Ibid*., p.169.

5 Chambers, C. (2004). Research that matters: Finding a path with heart. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 2 (1), p.2.

6 Chambers, C. (1998). On taking my own (love) medicine: Memory work in writing and pedagogy. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 14 (4), p.15.

7 Goldberg, N.(1990). *Wild mind: Living the writer's life*. Toronto: Bantam Books.

Goldberg, N.(1986). *Writing down the bones: Freeing the writer within*. Boston: Shambala.

8 Elbow, P.(1973). *Writing without teachers*. New York: Columbia University Press.

9 Brande, D.(1981). *Becoming a Writer*. New York: Perigee Books.

10 *Ibid*., p.17.

11 Hasebe-Ludt, E., Chambers, C., & Leggo, C. (2009). *Life writing and literary metissage as an ethos for our times*. New York: Peter Lang. pp.153-154.

12 Rothberg, M.(2009). *Multidirectional memory*. Standford, California: Stanford University Press. pp.5.

13 *Ibid*., p.5.

14 Hampton, E. (1995). Memory comes before knowledge. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 21, supplement, 46-54.

15 *Ibid*., p.52.

16 *Ibid*., p.53.

17 *Ibid*., p.54.

18 Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962) *The Phnomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Wilson, New York: Humanities Press.

19 Sartre, J. (1965). *What is Literature*. Translated by Bernard Frechtman. New York: Harper and Row.

20 Grumet, M. (2006). Toward a poor curriculum. In W. Pinar & M. Grumet, *Toward a poor curriculum* (pp.67-88). Troy, New York: Educator's International Press.

21 *Ibid*., p.69.

22 *Ibid*., p.74.